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Provisional summary record of the 4th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 6 February 2004, at 3 p.m.

President: Ms. Rasi ..... (Finland)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*) (E/2004/L.3)

1. **Mr. Kumalo** (South Africa), speaking as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi, said that a comprehensive account of the work of the Ad Hoc Group since his previous briefing in November 2003 was contained in the unedited report circulated to Council members. Following two months of consultations in New York with Burundi's development partners, the United Nations and its agencies, representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions and donor countries, the Ad Hoc Group had visited Burundi from 19 to 26 November 2003. Much of its work during the reporting period had been based on that visit.

2. The report contained an update on the political transition in Burundi, including the very successful meeting of the Forum of Development Partners of Burundi organized by the Government of Belgium, the Government of Burundi and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Twenty-five countries had participated in the Forum, held on 13 and 14 January in Brussels, and pledges had totalled $1.032 billion. Ten days later, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund had approved a three-year arrangement under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) for Burundi to support the country's economic reform programme through January 2007. That should pave the way for debt relief for Burundi under the enhanced Initiative for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries by 2005. The Paris Club would also be granting debt relief to Burundi as soon as the country's PRGF was approved by the IMF Executive Board.

3. The work of the Ad Hoc Group had taken place at a crucial time in the Burundi peace process. The Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la défense de la démocratie (CNDD-FDD) (Nkurunziza), a major rebel group, had joined the Transitional Government, leading to the creation of a joint Army Command. More recently, President Domitien Ndayizeye had met with the Forces Nationales de Libération (Palipehutu-FNL) (Agathon Rwasa) in the Netherlands following the Forum of Development Partners to discuss the possibility of securing a ceasefire agreement and incorporating FNL, the only rebel group that had yet to join the peace process, into the Transitional Government. The people of Burundi and the international community were aware that the country had never been so close to a comprehensive and fully inclusive peace. Every initiative must be taken to consolidate the peace process.

4. The Government of Burundi had already done considerable work to launch the country on the path of sustainable development and lay the groundwork for increased involvement by the international community. Representatives of the World Bank and IMF, meeting with the Ad Hoc Group in New York, had indicated that, despite the turmoil, the Burundian Government had managed to keep good records of public expenditures and maintain a solid administrative structure, a prerequisite for absorbing increased international support.

5. The monetary, economic and social challenges faced by the country, however, were enormous. Its economy had been devastated by 10 years of war, the embargo imposed by the countries of the region from 1996-1999 and the collapse of the price of coffee, its major source of income. In addition to reconstruction and development efforts, Burundi had one of the highest proportions of displaced persons of any African country (more than 17 per cent of the population) and their return would raise specific problems. Burundi's level of vulnerability, according to United Nations figures, was one of the highest in the world. In order for the country to engage in economic recovery and long-term rehabilitation and sustain the peace process, its people must benefit from tangible, organized and sustained support by State institutions.

6. Despite the resolute efforts of the Government and other social actors, the magnitude of the problems called for strong support by the international community and genuine partnership between the Burundian authorities and their development partners. It was clear to the Ad Hoc Group that budgetary and balance-of-payments support were essential. Business sector representatives, with whom the Group had met in Bujumbura, had also stressed the need for budgetary support to enable State institutions to pay their bills to private companies contracted by them in order to avoid general insolvency and widespread bankruptcy.

7. The Ad Hoc Group welcomed the international support provided to the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB). In response to the African Union's request to

be replaced by a United Nations peacekeeping force, the Security Council had invited the Secretary-General to submit recommendations in early March on how the United Nations could best support the full implementation of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi. In conclusion, he drew the Council's attention to the specific recommendations outlined by the Ad Hoc Group in its unedited report.

8. **Mr. Wrafter** (Ireland) said that he would be making a substantive statement on the report on behalf of the European Union.

9. **Mr. Kumalo** (South Africa), speaking as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, said that updated information on the Ad Hoc Group's activities since its previous report to the Council (E/2003/95 of July 2003) was contained in the unedited text circulated to Council members. He was pleased to report that President Henrique Pereira Rosa and his Transitional Government had fulfilled their obligations to promote the rule of law and political stability under the partnership approach proposed in the Ad Hoc Group's previous reports, and that, in return, some international donors had begun to provide critical economic assistance.

10. Following the resignation of President Koumba Yalá in September 2003, a Political Transition Charter signed by political parties, civil society and the army had established a National Transitional Council, a Transitional Government and a Transitional President. Reacting promptly to those events, the Advisory Group had issued a statement on 18 September 2003, calling on donors to consider extending emergency assistance to help Guinea-Bissau restore democratic rule. The Ad Hoc Group had also expressed its full support for the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Presidency of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) and the United Nations office in Bissau to resolve the crisis.

11. In November 2003, the Ad Hoc Advisory Group had convened an informal dialogue on Guinea-Bissau at United Nations Headquarters. A positive and constructive exchange of views had taken place among Transitional President Pereira Rosa, the Transitional Government's Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau, representatives of donor countries, the Executive Director for Guinea-Bissau and other senior officials at the World Bank, senior officials responsible for Guinea-Bissau at the International Monetary Fund, the Representative of the Secretary-General to Guinea-Bissau, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Guinea-Bissau and representatives of UNDP and the Department of Political Affairs. That informal dialogue had helped to build trust in the transitional authorities' commitment and capacity to normalize the political situation, ensure discipline and rigour in the use of public finances and improve the country's socio-economic situation. The appeal for emergency and medium-term assistance for Guinea-Bissau had been well received, and modalities for providing such assistance had been considered.

12. The President of Guinea-Bissau had now fulfilled all his tasks under the partnership approach. He had not only appointed ministers but also requested assistance from the international community in capacity-building for his Government and he had scheduled elections for 28 March 2004 to establish a Parliament that would consider a new Constitution. The President and Vice-President of the Supreme Court had been elected on 26 January.

13. In response to the call for assistance, UNDP had launched the Emergency Economic Management Fund (EEMF) recommended in the Group's initial report. Contributions had already been received from the Netherlands, Sweden and France. The Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries had established a Special Fund for Guinea-Bissau, to be channelled through EEMF, to which Angola, Brazil and Portugal had contributed. A UNDP fund to support the organization of elections had already received contributions as well. In view of the dire socio-economic situation in Guinea-Bissau, the Group recommended that the Council should make a further appeal to the donor community to increase emergency assistance through contributions to the UNDP-managed Fund, which was currently at a level insufficient to ensure the functioning of basic public institutions for the entire year.

14. Since the Council would be assessing lessons learned from the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Burundi and Guinea-Bissau at its substantive session of 2004, the report did not contain a full assessment of the Ad Hoc Group's activities. However, positive lessons had already been learned, including the value of the partnership approach, which set out actions to be taken by both the international community and the authorities of Guinea-Bissau, as a framework for the response of international donors to the country's emergency needs;

of the UNDP-managed Emergency Economic Management Fund as a critical tool for channelling international assistance to Guinea-Bissau; and of its close working relationships with IMF and the World Bank, demonstrating how much could be achieved through complementarity.

15. The continued interaction between the Council and the Security Council on Guinea-Bissau was exemplary. The spirit of collaboration between them had been reflected in the Security Council's invitations to the Group to participate in its mission to West Africa and in its debates on Guinea-Bissau.

16. In conclusion, the Ad Hoc Advisory Group welcomed the developments described in the report and hoped that the new situation would help to further mobilize support from the international community. As legislative elections were scheduled for March, the Group could visit Guinea-Bissau to engage in a dialogue with the new Government on how the international community could best assist it. The Council, however, would need to extend the Group's mandate and provide support for such a mission.

17. **Mr. Wrafter** (Ireland) said that he would be making a substantive statement on the report on behalf of the European Union.

18. **The President** drew attention to draft decision E/2004/L.3 entitled "Status of non-governmental organizations and other major groups accredited to the World Summit on Sustainable Development", which had been submitted to her on the basis of informal consultations. The draft decision had no programme budget implications. She took it that the Council wished to adopt the draft decision.

19. *Draft decision E/2004/L.3 was adopted.*

20. **Mr. Shamanov** (Russian Federation), speaking in explanation of position, said that the decision just adopted involved complex issues which went beyond the framework of the Commission on Sustainable Development and had implications for the work of the entire United Nations system. His delegation was grateful to Mr. Toscano (Switzerland), the negotiations facilitator, for achieving a constructive consensus. While welcoming the involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations in the work of the United Nations, particularly in implementing the tasks agreed on at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, and the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, his delegation wished to reiterate its position of principle, namely, that participation of NGOs in the work of the United Nations should be governed by the Council's decisions in that regard, and that any parallel procedures for NGO accreditation were inadmissible. His delegation therefore considered the decision just adopted to be an exception which should be limited to the first two-year implementation cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development and to those groups or organizations already accredited to the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

21. NGOs wishing to participate in the work of the Commission in future should abide by Council decisions and be accredited by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. In that connection, he wished to draw attention to paragraph (g) of the draft decision, requesting the Secretary-General to disseminate the decision widely. As time was of the essence, he urged the secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development to inform all interested NGOs of the decision as soon as possible. Referring to paragraph (c), he said that expressions of interest submitted to the Commission by NGOs would be an indication of how serious they were about participating in its activities during the first two-year implementation cycle. The Commission should monitor receipt of such expressions of interest and post them and all relevant information on its web site.

22. **Mr. Kotis** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of position, said that his delegation was grateful to Mr. Toscano (Switzerland), facilitator of the protracted and complicated negotiations which had culminated in the adoption of the draft decision. The decision marked an important step towards enhancing the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and sent a strong message about the Organization's commitment to greater participation by NGOs and other major groups in the Commission's work with a view to achieving internationally agreed development goals. His delegation hoped that the consensus achieved on the draft decision would provide further impetus to efforts to streamline and increase the effectiveness of participation by NGOs and major groups in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

23. **The President** said that, at its next meeting, the Council would hear, on the basis of the lists of NGOs

and other major groups referred to in the note by the secretariat (E/2004/8), the final decision on their participation in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

24. **Mr. Aho-Glele** (Benin) asked whether it would be more appropriate to address the question of the graduation of Cape Verde and Maldives, a substantive issue, at the next substantive session rather than during the current organizational session. Thus far, it had been dealt with only in substantive sessions, having already been deferred from the substantive session of July 2003 to the resumed substantive session of December 2003.

25. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Council) said that all pending matters had been referred to the current organizational session for action and read out the paragraph of the provisional agenda whereby the Council had decided to defer its consideration of chapter I.B of the report of the Commission on Sustainable Development on its eleventh session to the 2004 organizational session (E/2004/2, page 2).

26. **Mr. Aho-Glele** (Benin) expressed the hope that, if no adequate decision was taken during the current organizational session, the question would be given proper consideration during the next substantive session.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.